1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

124 made use of so much of his evidence as I believe to be trustworthy. His knowledge was not deep or accurate, but he often told me enough to enable me to extract the full account from others, who, seeing I knew something, thought they might as well tell me all. On one or two subjects, the whole of my information is derived from this man, but whenever this is the case I mention the fact, so that my readers may know the doubtful nature of the evidence. I only give such information, however, when I believe it to be correct. The informant in question was one of the cleverest of the Todas, and his usual fault was not that he deliberately deceived, but that he supplied the lacunæ in his knowledge by having recourse to his imagination. In the matter of folk-tales, where the difficulties of checking an account are especially great, I was obliged wholly to reject his assistance.

[115] An altogether different type of witness was my constant attendant, Kòdrner. His special business was to bring me people as the subjects for my psychological work and to act as my guide in visiting various parts of the hills. He did not profess to any wide knowledge of custom or ceremonial, and was always diffident about the information he gave; but he was a good observer, and could give an excellent account of any ceremony which he had witnessed or of any procedure in which he had been involved.

Except in a few cases the Todas were quite unable to give any explanations of their customs, the answer to nearly every inquiry being that the custom in question was ordained by the goddess Teikirzi. In the few cases in which an explanation was forthcoming, it seemed to me that it was usually a recent invention. The explanations of customs given in this book are therefore almost invariably those arrived at by myself from the study of the available evidence.

114 ●127 While I was working I had by me the books or papers of Harkness, Marshall, Breeks, and Thurston, the chief previous writers on the Todas, and I inquired into most of the details mentioned by them; but I have not

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

attempted any criticism or comment on the work of others except on special occasions when my own information is lacking or when I am uncertain as to the truth of their statements. Except in those cases in which I definitely refer to the work of others, every statement made in this book is the outcome of my own inquiry or observation. Whenever my account differs from those of others, it may be accepted that I have inquired into the discrepancy and that my account represents the result of a careful investigation.

As some of the accounts of the Todas were written many years ago, there is always the possibility that two dissimilar accounts may both be true and that the differences may represent changes in custom with lapse of time. There is one fact, however, which makes it probable that this explanation of discrepancies is not the true one. The accounts of the Todas which show the closest correspondence with my own are some of the earliest, especially the book of Captain Harkness, published in 1832, and the papers of Bernhard Schmid and C. F. Muzzy, published in 1837 and 1844 respectively. In many cases my work agrees more closely with these than with the accounts of later observers.

This is, perhaps, a suitable place to mention what I believe to be the chief source of error in previous accounts of the Todas. In their extensive intercourse with the Badagas, the Todas use the language of this people, with which they appear to be perfectly familiar. The Toda language is very difficult to understand, and the literature shows that from the first, most of those who have investigated Toda customs have used the Badaga language or Tamil as their means of communication. Every Toda village, every Toda institution or office, and nearly every object used by the Todas has its Badaga name as well as its proper Toda name, and, owing to intercourse through the intermediation of the Badagas, these names have come to be used not only by nearly all who have written on the Todas, but also in official documents connected with the people.

The names by which the Toda villages are known to Europeans are always the Badaga names and not those of

2: Marshall G-5 (1870) 1873 Toda

But for the linguist, I trust Chapter XXIX. will have especial attractions.

To the Honorable Sir A. Arbuthnot, C.S., K.C.S.I., Secretary to the Government of Madras, I am greatly indebted, for having placed at my disposal, the records existing in the Revenue Department, on the subject of Toda infanticide.

I am beholden to the skill of the distinguished artists, Messrs. Bourne and Shepherd, of Simla, and to Messrs. Nicholas and Curths, of Madras, for the photographs which decorate the book. These have been printed in carbon, by the Autotype Fine Art Company, 36 Rathbone Place, London.

W. E. MARSHALL.

Faizabad:
2nd October, 1872.

[p. x is blank]

 A perusal of the Column in Table No. 8 which affords

CHAP. X.

particulars regarding the inhabitants, will give a curious insight of the social economy of the Mand. It may be viewed as a house occupied by one family; in each room of which a subdivision of the family lives. If we look closely into the details of—for instance—villages Diljâvenu and Koana-koar, we find in the former, 3 rooms in which live 5 adult men, 3 adult women, 2 girls twelve years of age, besides 8 other children of both sexes. In the latter village are 3 rooms containing 6 adult men, 5 adult women, one of whom is unmarried, 1 girl of fourteen years, with 3 small boys.

The people do not set apart a room as bachelor-hall, as some equally rude tribes do; the Kôls for instance.

I find in a statistical Report of the Nilagiris,[4] submitted in the year 1847 to the Government of that day, that the Todas were then estimated at only 337 people. Owing, perhaps, to the low figure at which the number is fixed; partly also to the existence of certain mistakes, which have of late been discovered in the names and positions assigned to certain villages, an impression exists that the data are not to be entirely relied upon. But the record, given as found in the carefully compiled Report, is, I believe, not very incorrect. No census having been published since 1847, I am indebted to the kindness of the late Commissioner of the Nilagiris,[5] for the most reliable statement of the number of the Todas, extant. Mr. Breeks believes that in the year 1867 they amounted to 455 males and 249 females, of all ages; giving a total of 704 souls.

6. Referring to the Census Table of 11 villages of various sizes; it appears that there are 112 males + 84 females = 196 souls in those Mands, or 17·82 as the average number in each. Of these 112 males, 49 + 22 = 71 are in the prime of life.

[4] Captain J. Ouchterlony, Madras Engineers, 'Statistical Report of the Nilgherry Hills. 1847.'

[5] Mr. J. Breeks.

1 [See pp. 98 and 99, Category 116 -- Analyst]

7:Thurston E-5 (no date)1909
AW60 Toda AW60

religion of this exceptionally interesting tribe, numbering, according to the latest census returns, 807 individuals, which inhabits the Nīlgiri plateau. I shall, therefore, content myself with recording the rambling notes made by myself during occasional visits to Ootacamund and Paikāra, supplemented by extracts from the book just referred to, and the writings of Harkness and other pioneers of the Nīlgiris.

The Todas maintain a large-horned race of semi-domesticated buffaloes, on whose milk and its products (butter and ney)* they still depend largely, though to a less extent than in bygone days before the establishment of the Ootacamund bazar, for existence. It has been said that "a Toda's worldly wealth is judged by the number of buffaloes he owns. Witness the story in connection with the recent visit to India of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. A clergyman, who has done mission work among the Todas, generally illustrates Bible tales through the medium of a magic-lantern. One chilly afternoon, the Todas declined to come out of their huts. Thinking they required humouring like children, the reverend gentleman threw on the screen a picture of the Prince of Wales, explaining the object of his tour, and, thinking to impress the Todas, added 'The Prince is exceedingly wealthy, and is bringing out a retinue of two hundred people.' 'Yes, yes,' said an old man, wagging his head sagely, 'but how many buffaloes is he bringing?"

The Todas lead for the most part a simple pastoral life. But I have met with more than one man who had served, or who was still serving Government in the modest capacity of a forest guard, and I have heard of

* Ney = ghi or clarified butter.

13: Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW60 Toda AW60

[P. 240]

CHAPTER 3

THE POLYANDRY OF THE TODAS OF THE NILGIRIS

114 It has often been said that the Todas are the best known aboriginal community in the world. Every general treatise on anthropology is supposed to make at least a passing reference to them, and it is certainly true that data concerning them in very widely quoted in ethnological literature the world over. This, to a large extent, is due to the excellent work done among them by that distinguished British anthropologist, the late Dr W. H. R. Rivers. His book, *The Todas* (see Bibliography), is a classic on the subject, and its voluminous contents cover to a remarkable degree all those aspects of their culture which it was possible to investigate with the contemporary ethnographical means at the disposal of the author. Since then, much progress has been made in this field, and, as I was able to note when with the Todas, the store of information which they can offer is still very far from being exhausted. From this point of view, as from many others, they are truly a most remarkable people, worthy of continued anthropological attention.

[127] During my first visit to the Nilgiris, my time was mostly taken up with making the acquaintance of the tribe. I read Rivers on the spot and looked into the polyandry of the people in a general fashion. I also got to know the neighbouring inhabitants, without a knowledge of whom it is difficult to acquite a proper functional picture of Toda culture, so closely is the latter bound up with that of others, especially in ceremonial and economic matters. On my return, ten years later, I delved more deeply into polyandry, and, in order to get a thorough working knowledge of this form of the marriage institution as practised by the Nilgiri tribe, made a specialized study of one single family, in which two successive generations of men had had quite a considerable number of children born in this type of wedlock.

[128] In this chapter, on the polyandry of the Todas of the Nilgiris, I shall deal first with the general study which I made in 1939, and follow on